

# Coffs Encourager

Newsletter to the Coffs Coast area  
Nambucca, Port Macquarie, Sapphire  
Beach & Woolgoolga

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Coffs Coast church of Christ - [www.coffschurch.org.au](http://www.coffschurch.org.au)

CWA Hall, 3 Dalley St. Coffs Harbour Worship-Sunday 10am, Study-Tuesday 6pm

Back Issues are available from our website.



*People who encourage us  
in our walk with Jesus*

## Sudhu Sundar Singh by M. Ancell

One of the more unusual men to come out of India in the early part of the last century was a man named Sundar Singh. He was a Sikh who converted to Christianity and spent the rest of his life preaching to the Sikh people of Northern India and to the people of Nepal and Tibet. He made several speaking tours abroad, spending time in England, and even in Australia.

When he was converted, he was banished from his home and family. This was hard because he was very close to his family and their circle of friends. He had been raised in the loving care of his mother up to this time and retained a very special place in his heart for her. It was she who had him schooled in the local Presbyterian school there in India because it was the best choice of all of the schools. Since they were able to afford it, off he went with her blessing.

For most of his formative years he was deeply devoted to the Sikh way of life and thought. This was his father's religion and way of life. He raised his family, including

"Sundar journeyed barefoot from village to village, preaching the good news of Christ's kingdom.

He journeyed throughout Punjab, Kashmir, and India; he even went into Tibet. Despite poverty, hunger, frequent illness, and harsh persecution, he always radiated Christ's love and joy."

Excerpt from an article  
by G.B. Singh  
[Sikhpectrum.com](http://Sikhpectrum.com)

Sundar, to be strictly Sikhs, and nothing less than Sikhs. To the father, the way of the warrior was the one and only way. There would be no toleration for thinking otherwise.

So, when Sundar did convert to Christianity, his father was greatly angered and banished him. This 'father' even tried to do away with him by putting a poison in the bowl of rice with which he completed his ritual of casting him out. He did this to symbolize the full and total rejection of this once favoured son. But Sundar survived and continued to reach out to his father. In latter years, this persistency was rewarded for he, Sundar Singh, was instrumental in his father's conversion to Christianity.

This man dressed in the saffron robes of a sadhu, a holy man, this Sundar Singh is most famous for his preaching trips into Nepal where he reputedly, established a few, small, congregations. But his main claim to fame, in our way of thinking, is as the author of the words to that simple Christian chorus song "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus". This was the song that he sang as he entered villages in Nepal, announcing him as a Christian, even though he wore the saffron coloured robes of the 'Sudhu'. He was a man who was to become honoured from Tibet through to Northern India as a truly holy man.

He would sing this song as he walked along, using the language of the local people among whom he was walking, thus announcing his intentions and his belief vocally and loudly. This is why the song has its particular Hindustani melody. It came from there. It is the melody of announcement, used with different words to declare the purpose of the holy men of that area. This very bold and deliberate action was one that put his life at risk, because of its Christian declaration. But, in spite of those risks, he would not be stopped and he continued to sing and to preach what he knew of as the truth.

He was the first 'Christian' preacher allowed into Tibet, and one of only a very few who have been honoured by both Tibet and India as a very special and significant person.

The area where he was able to preach has today congregations of the Slymanon District Presbyterians, a group who preach a belief in autonomous congregations, with full immersion baptism for the remission of sins. They are still active, in albeit an underground manner, in all of Pakistan, Northern India, and even in rural China. Another person of this group is a man named Eric Liddell, who was a missionary to China in the 1930's and 1940's and immortalized, somewhat, in the movie, "The Chariots Of Fire". The Slymanon District Presbyterians were very close to the thoughts of Alexander Campbell and Richard Haldane when they all studied in Glasgow University.

# Don't Touch My Sheep!

Article from Keeping in Touch  
March /07 Editor P. Tickner

John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*



Jesus declared this statement. In context, he made it to contrast his concern for people with concerns of those who exploited people. The basic contrasts declared two realities.

(1) Jesus unselfishly focused on the benefits of people while others focused selfishly on personal benefits.

(2) He gave life while others deserted in the moments of crisis and brought death. His purposes never exploited people. His purposes brought and gave life freely. Ultimately, his death would bring life to people.

Today's Christians often miss the central point. Most of us are unfamiliar with the relationship between first century sheep and their shepherd. It was founded on total dependence and absolute trustworthiness. Only when sheep had a trustworthy shepherd would the relationship work. Sheep were totally dependent. Without a shepherd, they could not find food. In fact, they would over-graze an area and literally destroy their food source. A good shepherd had to be wise enough not to allow over-grazing.

Without a shepherd, sheep seldom found water in arid places. A good shepherd led them to water. Thirsty sheep in arid places seldom could find water on their own. Good shepherds defended sheep. A flock was defenseless without their shepherd. The only thing they knew to do in crisis was panic! In their panic, sheep endangered themselves—rather than hurting their enemy, they in their panic hurt themselves. A shepherd made it possible for sheep to have life! An excellent, accomplished shepherd provided a good life for his sheep. We were made to live.

We exist because the Source of Life, God, gave us existence. By design we were made to live. Life, not death, fulfills our purpose. It is impossible to diminish life and not diminish us! Though we do not like to admit it, we are dependent creatures. While we value life, we do not know the focus of life. We do not understand what we are about. Left to ourselves, we are prone to selfishness. We do a poor job of considering future consequences to life. We are so "pleasure" prone and so "lifestyle" conscious we are vulnerable to "now thinking"

Cont. on back

as if everything in the future will continue as it exists in this moment. We do a horrible job of leading ourselves, focus ourselves, or directing ourselves. We are far, far more likely to make “self-destruct” choices than wise and insightful choices. We need someone to guide us who unselfishly has our best-interest as his priority. We need someone to teach us what life is about. We need someone to show us how to live. We need a good shepherd, Jesus Christ. He provides life when death surrounds us.

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## A Cup of Coffee

Article from Keeping in Touch  
March /07 Editor P. Tickner

A group of graduates, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned to complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor came in with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups—porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite—telling them to help themselves to the coffee. When all the students had a cup in hand, the professor said, “If you noticed, all the nice-looking expensive cups were



taken, leaving the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee in most cases. It is just more expensive; in some cases it even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup but you consciously went for the best cups ... and then began eyeing each others' cups. “Consider this: Life is the coffee. The jobs, money, and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of Life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us.” God brews the coffee, not the cups ... enjoy your coffee.

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